United Nations S/PV.6274

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6274th meeting

Friday, 19 February 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Araud	(France)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Gabon	Mr. Issoze-Ngondet
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Ms. Ziade
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The question concerning Haiti

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Record of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

10-24612 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The question concerning Haiti

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Haiti, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mérorès (Haiti) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend invitations under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Council will hear briefings by Mr. John Holmes and Mr. Alain Le Roy. I now give the floor to Mr. Holmes.

Mr. Holmes: Thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Council on my visit to Haiti and the Dominican Republic last week and on the humanitarian situation in Haiti.

The aim of my trip, following an initial visit with the Secretary-General four days after the earthquake, was to review on the ground the challenges the humanitarian community faces in the months ahead. In the Dominican Republic, a vital logistics hub and staging area for the relief operation, I thanked the Government for its exemplary cooperation and its contribution to the relief effort in Haiti. I visited a public hospital, in which severely injured Haitians, including children, have been receiving life-saving medical treatment. I also visited the border area between the Dominican Republic and Haiti to see in particular the fragile and flood-prone road corridor through which large quantities of relief supplies enter Haiti. This road must be repaired and strengthened urgently, before the rainy season causes major damage and blocks it.

In Haiti I visited Léogâne, the epicentre of the earthquake, where its devastating effects were particularly clear, before going on to Port-au-Prince to look at progress there, as well as to meet the Government and the many actors, humanitarian and military, engaged in the relief operation.

Let me repeat first of all that the national and local authorities, civil society and the people of Haiti themselves have coped with extraordinary resilience and patience in the midst of devastation on a scale which has rarely been seen, particularly in a capital city. Life of all kinds was visibly returning to the streets. Meanwhile, a large and complex humanitarian response is in place, despite the destruction of government, United Nations and non-governmental organization (NGO) offices, the loss of many key personnel and the initial absence of so many basic services.

It was heartening to see the determination shown by United Nations, NGO and Red Cross/Red Crescent national and international staff in the field. They have worked tirelessly since just hours after the earthquake struck, in often dreadful working and living conditions themselves, to launch the relief operation in support of the Haitian people. Let me also pay tribute to the peacekeepers of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and United Nations police, as well as to the other military forces, who are all playing a vital role, using their indispensable assets and helping to distribute aid safely and to maintain public order.

The humanitarian situation is now gradually improving on a daily basis. The worst of the medical emergency is behind us. More than 3 million people have received food rations and continue to do so on an increasingly targeted basis. Clean water is available for

the vast majority of those in need. Essential infrastructure — such as the port, airport, electricity and telecommunications facilities and most roads, which during the first days and weeks were bottlenecks for relief and aid workers trying to get into the country — is increasingly operational. Every day, larger quantities of relief supplies are reaching Haiti and being distributed.

Nevertheless, it is clear that not everyone in need has yet been reached and that we have much more to do on the ground, particularly in terms of emergency shelter, other non-food items and sanitation. The estimated 1.2 million Haitians in need of emergency shelter support desperately need a waterproof cover over their heads, and we are still only 30 per cent there. We are straining every nerve to speed up the delivery of shelter materials, mainly plastic sheeting, but also tents, before the rains begin in earnest. This shelter and sanitation surge is the top priority.

While life may be returning in some ways, the devastating effect of the earthquake is still abundantly evident in the capital and elsewhere. Around 3 million people — one in every three Haitians — were badly affected by the earthquake. The majority of those are in the capital, Port-au-Prince, but also in other surrounding towns and cities, including Jacmel, and the epicentre, Léogâne, where 80 per cent of buildings were destroyed. It was encouraging to see in Léogâne that, despite the initial difficulties involved in reaching the city, a good deal was happening in terms of relief assistance. Over 70 organizations are on the ground in Léogâne, including an office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Cooperation with the large and effective Canadian military presence was clearly good. Food and shelter distribution had made good progress.

However, it was also clear that some of the informal sites, where those unable to return to their homes were living, were not sustainable. They were overcrowded, liable to flood and at serious risk of fire from cooking in the makeshift shelters. The identification of alternative sites is a challenge, but land should be easier to find in Léogâne than in the more congested and geographically challenging context of Port-au-Prince itself.

In Port-au-Prince, I visited an informal camp in the grounds of the Pétionville Club, where tens of thousands of people have taken refuge. It was both encouraging and worrying. It was encouraging because the camp seemed well organized and relatively clean, with good availability of food and shelter material, a rudimentary school already established and a calm atmosphere overall. There was excellent cooperation between the NGOs and the United States forces on the spot. But it was worrying, again, because of the very obvious unsuitability and unsustainability of the site once the rainy season begins. The steep slopes and floodable area at the bottom of the site mean that a lot of people must be moved out soon. But there is nowhere for them to go until alternative, more acceptable sites are made available. I give this detail because there are many similar sites with high risk of flooding that also need to be decongested. So, provision of suitable land is a high priority, and we are working with the Government on this.

In a meeting with President Préval and Government ministers, I thanked him for the Government's continued leadership and engagement with the United Nations and partners. He was understandably anxious to see faster progress, on shelter in particular. I assured him that we were doing our utmost to meet the emergency shelter and sanitation requirements before the rainy season, as well as making an early start on the huge task of rubble removal: rapid clearance of some urban sites would free up areas to which the people on currently congested sites could move. To do this, we need to mobilize urgently more heavy equipment, including assets which the military and the private sector can provide, to supplement the efforts of the 75,000 Haitians who have already been engaged in United Nations cash-for-work programmes. We also need to start a systematic effort to assess earthquake-affected structures, to decide which need demolition, which can be repaired and which can be used.

The cluster approach that the international humanitarian community has developed since the Asian tsunami five years ago is proving its worth in improving coordination and the effectiveness of the response. Local cluster leadership is being reinforced, faced with a catastrophe of this magnitude and the 900-plus organizations on the ground whose efforts need to be coordinated. A Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator has also now been deployed to Port-au-Prince, not least to strengthen and expand partnerships with key stakeholders, including bilateral donors, military forces and private actors.

The situation in Port-Au-Prince, the capital, and surrounding towns has been the main focus of relief efforts so far, but there are huge needs elsewhere too, which require a nationwide response. Nearly half a million people have left earthquake-affected areas and dispersed around the country. Many have gone to areas that were already highly vulnerable before the earthquake. Host families and communities have been very generous, but are poorly placed to feed and look after their guests for long. Help is badly needed for all concerned and is now a priority for the relief operation.

While we continue to refine our assessment of the humanitarian needs, the longer-term post-disaster needs assessment process is now under way in parallel to look at reconstruction and redevelopment requirements. We need to make sure that our relief efforts pave the way as effectively as possible for this phase to enable Haiti to be built back better, which is the overriding aim of us all.

On the resource mobilization front, I thank all Member States and private donors again for contributing generously to the relief operation and fully funding the initial six-month Haiti flash appeal. However, sustained and additional support will be necessary for the long haul before us. The Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Haiti, President Clinton, launched yesterday the revised humanitarian appeal, taking into account not only relief needs but also early recovery help to be delivered within a 12-month time frame, including in key areas such as health, education and agriculture. The revised appeal, for a total of $1.4 billion, includes the amounts raised in response to the initial six-month appeal. Unmet needs therefore amount to $768 million, which is the amount we are asking for now to fund projects from 54 non-governmental organizations, 21 United Nations agencies and the International Organization for Migration. They include plans for the upcoming rainy and hurricane seasons, not least transitional shelter requirements, as well as vital disaster-risk reduction measures.

In sum, the humanitarian situation in Haiti is undoubtedly improving day by day, but we are under no illusion about the scale of the challenges still ahead for the next weeks and months. The international humanitarian community will continue to support the Haitian Government in addressing the most urgent needs and gaps as the longer-term recovery and reconstruction processes gather pace in parallel.

There are no instant solutions. It will take time to cover all these needs and care to maintain help to the most vulnerable without creating dangerous aid dependency. But we must not waver in helping several million people not only to survive this catastrophe, but also to rebuild better, more prosperous lives and livelihoods for the future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Holmes for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Le Roy.

Mr. Le Roy (*spoke in French*): Since the tragedy of 12 January, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has focused on three main objectives: supporting and facilitating relief operations, ensuring law and order and security, and — given its enormous losses in personnel and infrastructure — restoring the Mission's capacities.

I should like to begin by referring to the Mission's capacities. MINUSTAH, as members of the Council are aware, has lost 91 staff members, including the head of Mission. Over the past five weeks, we have not only replaced our deceased colleagues, but also deployed additional personnel and resources. More than 300 officers have been dispatched to reinforce the Mission.

As everyone knows, military operations have continued, in particular led by the Brazilian and other contingents deployed to MINUSTAH and to our police forces. Thanks to the timely decision of the Security Council to increase authorized troop numbers, we are currently strengthening those military and police capabilities. We intend to deploy more than 1,500 troops and up to 500 additional police officers by the second week of March, and they should be operational in April. Of course, I wish to thank the many Member States that have offered troops and police to MINUSTAH in recent weeks. Those reinforcements are crucial at this very critical time.

A flexible approach to resource management allowed MINUSTAH to react immediately to the unprecedented challenges raised by the earthquake. In the coming weeks, we shall ask Member States for additional resources, initially on the basis of a preliminary study, before we submit a new, detailed budget.

In the days that followed the earthquake, MINUSTAH redirected its efforts and, to the extent

possible, supported the delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance. Since then, in close cooperation with the United States and Canadian military on the ground, we have guaranteed security and provided logistical support to the humanitarian effort. This has been a true challenge, but I am convinced that the mechanisms we have established to coordinate the international presence in that area and its support of the Haitian authorities have considerably improved the situation.

Our United States and Canadian bilateral partners will gradually reduce their presence, although it is important that these reductions and withdrawals correspond to benchmarks and transfers scheduled jointly with MINUSTAH. I was very pleased to receive confirmation in Washington, D.C. yesterday that the United States shared that view.

Allow me to say a few words about the security situation and the rule of law as a whole. Following the earthquake, one of MINUSTAH's main priorities was to restore law and order in the affected zones and the capacities of the Haitian National Police (HNP). To that end, more than 70 per cent of the MINUSTAH police were redeployed in the affected zones. Like all Government institutions, the HNP was severely impacted by the earthquake. Some 40 per cent of its facilities and equipment is no longer operational. While the vast majority of officers have resumed their duties, the HNP's intervention capacity is severely limited by the loss of vehicles, communications systems and essential databases. Nevertheless, since the earthquake the HNP has proved to be very effective and has contributed significantly to restoring the general calm that has prevailed in the affected zones.

The judicial apparatus has also been affected. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Palace of Justice, the Court of Cassation and the trial courthouse have been destroyed. Several judges have been killed. Apart from the small number of particularly urgent cases, the judicial process has been largely suspended in the zones affected by the earthquake. Of the country's 17 prisons, eight have been totally or partially destroyed, and nearly 5,000 detainees — 60 per cent of the prison population — have escaped. Several hundred of these fugitives are considered to be particularly dangerous. Some 80 per cent of those who have escaped were in provisional custody.

Today, the security situation remains stable, but potentially fragile. The deterioration in living conditions has led to an increase in such crimes as robbery, mugging and looting. Of course, we fear a resumption of gang violence, despite the fact that it has hitherto been limited largely to internal power struggles, as those who escaped seek to regain control of their former turfs. The HNP and MINUSTAH are following the situation very closely.

Despite the relative stability, we are aware that the current calm is extremely precarious. If are unable to meet humanitarian imperatives — in particular the need for shelter before the rainy season — Haitians will become increasingly frustrated, opening the door to possible political manipulation. We must critically address this potential source of instability in the weeks and months to come. Security will also depend on our ability to help the police, judicial and penal systems not only to recover the resources that were at their disposal before the earthquake, but also to increase them, inter alia, by training new officers.

(*spoke in English*)

Just as important as the physical security of Haiti and its people is the question of political stability, the lack of which has often caused violent tensions in the past. The legislative elections planned for the end of March have now been postponed by President Préval. They may be held later this year or even in 2011. While this decision has been broadly supported by all political forces, it raises very significant constitutional questions about the period following 10 May, when the mandates of the members of the lower house and of a large number of senators expire. Ensuring full legislative capacity beyond 10 May is a key challenge that will need to be resolved quickly.

There have also been calls to replace the current Government, for example with a *gouvernement de salut public* that would include members of the opposition. Others have emphasized the need to restructure the Government and form a new Cabinet that can deal with the complex challenges ahead. Some parties have accused the Government of political favouritism in the distribution of aid.

At the same time, there has been no shortage of ideas on how to move forward. Several political parties and electoral platforms have engaged in consultations on critical issues ranging from governance, elections and constitutional reform to decentralization. The

Prime Minister himself has advocated fundamental changes, including decentralization of the Government and greater focus on the regions. A number of high-profile private sector leaders are actively involved in the humanitarian response and see the current situation as an opportunity to steer reconstruction efforts towards a modernization of the State architecture by initiating critical socio-economic reforms.

It is of the utmost urgency that such discussions now be channelled into an executive-led dialogue on the political way forward. Otherwise, spoilers may take advantage of the fluid and fragile political situation to spark instability. President Préval, in recent weeks, has rightly focused on the relief activities, and his leadership is now required more than ever. It is now more important than ever for the Government to engage all political forces in substantive discussions on key governance issues, to work constructively with the private sector, and to enhance its communication and outreach efforts to the Haitian public. The Government of Haiti is fully aware of this and of the need to reach broad political consensus before the 31 March donors' conference, and the United Nations stands ready to support such an effort by the Government.

There is no doubt that the earthquake has fundamentally changed the context in which MINUSTAH is operating. And there is no doubt that this will have — as in fact it has already had — implications for the role of MINUSTAH and the broader United Nations. The damage to Haiti's legislative, administrative, socio-economic, educational and cultural centres has been unprecedented. The Government of Haiti has lost much of its infrastructure and a large number of its civil servants, with devastating consequences for its ability to deliver basic services and to deal with the emergency at hand.

That Haiti needs assistance — lots of it — is of course very clear. However, much less clear right now is exactly what kind of assistance is required and how such assistance should best be delivered. The post-disaster needs assessment — which was launched, as John Holmes said, on 18 February — should address much of this. It is a very important process which is led by the Haitian Government and supported by the United Nations, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the European Commission, and will provide a crucial basis for the 31 March donors' conference. The outcomes of the post-disaster needs assessment and the discussions at the New York conference will provide a much better basis to plan for MINUSTAH's future and that of the broader United Nations engagement.

Yesterday, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mulet attended a meeting of development ministers of the European Union on Haiti. Among the topics discussed were the important issue of shelter and the issue of division of labour among donors, which would help to lessen the burden of coordination on the Haitian Government. This issue will undoubtedly be taken up at the New York conference.

To conclude, I would like to recall that the earthquake hit Haiti at the moment when the country was, for the first time in nearly five decades, making significant strides toward stabilization and governance. With the support of MINUSTAH, Haiti had organized successful presidential and parliamentary elections, established an unprecedented level of security, and set strategies in motion for economic reconstruction and development that contributed to two years of successive economic growth. Planning for comprehensive constitutional and administrative reform was very much under way. Haiti finally had a national vision and a road map for sustainable peace and development.

The earthquake has, of course, caused unprecedented destruction and suffering, but it has not destroyed that vision. The international community and the United Nations must come together behind the Government of Haiti and align their interventions and long-term plans with a national vision for reconstruction. This will require a sustainable level of support, in terms of both resources and technical assistance. In doing so, we need to empower the Government and not supplant it.

I count on the Council's support to ensure that MINUSTAH will continue to have the means required to help Haiti through this challenge.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Le Roy for his briefing.

Before I give the floor to the Haitian Ambassador, all of my colleagues will no doubt join me in paying tribute to the work of United Nations personnel on the ground in difficult conditions. I would ask Mr. Holmes and Mr. Le Roy to convey the

appreciation of all Security Council members to their personnel.

I now give the floor to the representative of Haiti.

Mr. Mérorès (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I am very grateful to you, Sir, for having organized this meeting of the Council to hear the very edifying briefings of Mr. Holmes and Mr. Le Roy, which, in the view of the Haitian delegation, reflect the tireless commitment of the entire international community to the ongoing effort to assist, re-establish and rebuild my country.

The woes unleashed upon Haiti on 12 January have given the international community an opportunity each day to express its great solidarity and compassion for a wounded people that continues to be battered by fate. It is also another opportunity for me and for President Préval, as he has done many times, to sincerely thank the great comity of nations and to express the gratitude of the Government and people of Haiti for the overwhelming generosity exhibited in this tragic situation. I take this opportunity to once again convey the condolences of the people and Government of Haiti to the United Nations and the families of staff members of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) who have been so sorely tested.

The Haitian delegation welcomes resolution 1908 (2010), adopted last month, endorsing the recommendation of the Secretary-General to increase the overall force levels of MINUSTAH. We welcome that timely decision and, on behalf of the Government, thank the troop-contributing countries and through them their Governments that promptly acceded to that request.

In spite of improved conditions on the ground, as today's speakers have noted, the situation remains of great concern. The humanitarian needs are immense, and urgent action must therefore be taken to meet the requirements of the population. The heavy toll is known to all — more than 270,000 deaths, more than 250,000 public, commercial and residential buildings destroyed, and more than 1 million people living in the streets or public areas. These figures speak for themselves, and have also been reflected in televised images.

Until the situation is stabilized, and given the urgent need to prepare for the coming rainy season, assistance and recovery activities must be strengthened quickly and extended to people and places throughout the country that have yet to receive them.

Thus, the revised $1.44 billion flash appeal launched yesterday by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which will assist 3 million people gravely affected by the catastrophe by the end of the year, comes at the right moment. As we know, more than 1.2 million people require emergency assistance in terms of shelter and sanitation needs. At least 2 million people require food assistance. The host families and communities assisting displaced persons who have fled the most heavily impacted cities are bearing that weighty burden with virtually no help, and they need assistance as well. At the same time, the Government needs assistance to re-establish the agricultural sector as the hurricane season approaches.

A significant problem mentioned by Mr. Le Roy is public security. It is important to note that, although the security situation has remained relatively stable since 12 January, there have been various instances of banditry not only in the capital but also throughout the country. Over 4,000 escaped prisoners, including some of the most dangerous criminals, are still roaming the streets and beginning to resume their activities. They pose a potential threat to life and property, and the Government is in the process of tracking them down. With the assistance of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the Haitian National Police is working to apprehend them to ensure that they can do no further harm.

The Government continues to mobilize itself to prepare for the ministerial meeting on Haiti's reconstruction to be held on 31 March. A comprehensive reconstruction plan will be presented to our various partners that will cover all the basic elements necessary to the viable reconstruction and sustainable development of the country. It will be an arduous task. International solidarity allowed us to quickly address the situation in the first few hours following the quake. The conference will be another step in the enormous effort of building the new Haiti sought by the Government and people of our country. That cannot be done without the support of the international community. I should like in advance, on behalf of the Government and people of Haiti, to thank the international community, which has always stood by us.

The President (*spoke in French*): As the representative of Haiti knows, he can count on the support of the entire Security Council in the great effort to provide emergency assistance and to rebuild Haiti.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of its prior consultations, I now invite the members of the Council to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.